

The overthrow of the regime of Major General Muhammad Siad Barre in 1991 led to a bitter struggle among competing clans for the reins of power. Somalia rapidly descended into chaos. In the absence of a national government, the country fragmented into factions headed by various warlords, two of which, General Mohamed Farah Aideed and Ali Mahdi Mohamed, competed for control of Mogadishu. The combination of a drought and fighting among the many warlords created a massive humanitarian disaster. Widespread suffering from famine and civil war led to humanitarian intervention in April 1992 under UN leadership.<sup>1</sup> The UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) was created to monitor the cease-fire in Mogadishu, provide protection and security for UN personnel and equipment, and escort deliveries of humanitarian supplies.

The operation consisted of 50 unarmed military observers and 500 lightly armed infantry tasked with monitoring the cease-fire between Aideed and Mohamed. In August 1992, UNOSOM I's mandate was enlarged to include protecting humanitarian convoys and distribution centers throughout Somalia.<sup>2</sup> However, the situation in Mogadishu continued to deteriorate. General Aideed mounted opposition to this intervention, most notably when he attacked Pakistani peacekeepers at the airport in November and warned that

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<sup>1</sup>The UN Security Council adopted Resolution (UNSCR) 751 on April 24, 1992.

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed treatment of UNOSOM I's experience, see United Nations Department of Public Information, *The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peace-Keeping Forces*, 3rd ed., New York, 1996, pp. 291–294.

any forcible UNOSOM I deployment would be met by violence.<sup>3</sup> It became clear that UNOSOM I could not provide adequate security for humanitarian activities.<sup>4</sup>

In response to the difficulties faced by UNOSOM I, the Security Council authorized the deployment of the U.S.-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) on December 3, 1992 (UNSCR 794, 1992). The mission was to safeguard the relief effort and lasted until May 1993. UNITAF entered Somalia with the understanding that its responsibilities would quickly be turned back over to the UN. U.S. Special Envoy Robert Oakley negotiated with Somali clan leaders in Ethiopia in early January 1993 and achieved a general agreement on comprehensive disarmament, which included placing heavy weapons under international supervision. As UNITAF deployed to Somalia, however, it was not clear how or whether the general agreement would be implemented.

## CHALLENGES

The primary challenge the U.S.-led UNITAF mission faced in Somalia was to reassert order in what had become a chaotic and violent society. For UNITAF, it was critical to establish a secure environment for relief supplies. Doing so involved securing the airfield and seaport in Mogadishu, then expanding the operation to secure cities and relief centers, such as Baidoa, Oddur, and Kismayo, throughout the country.

### Security

As UNITAF began its mission, a number of tribes and factions were involved in the fighting. Both civilians and militias in Somalia were heavily armed, creating barriers to effective policing. The population was not required to disarm; there was no national government; and the foundations for transition to a reconstruction phase were never

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<sup>3</sup>Walter Clarke, "Failed Visions and Uncertain Mandates," in Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, eds., *Learning from Somalia*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997, pp. 3–19.

<sup>4</sup>Unlike the other cases studied here, no settlement to the conflict was reached in Somalia. U.S. and international intervention occurred in the midst of the conflict in Somalia. This case will focus exclusively on the period of explicit or implicit U.S. leadership of international operations and when U.S. troops were on the ground.

implemented. The unstable security environment created significant challenges for UNITAF in securing major airports, seaports, installations, and food distribution points, as well as in providing protection for convoys and relief organizations.

### **Humanitarian**

The collapse of the government following the overthrow of Siad Barre led to a widespread humanitarian crisis in the country. The ensuing civil war created approximately 2 million refugees, including internally displaced persons (IDPs).<sup>5</sup> This situation was exacerbated by a drought in 1991. The combination of events created a widespread famine, with more than 1.5 million people at immediate risk of starvation. An estimated one-third of all Somali children below the age of five died from starvation and diseases related to malnutrition during the worst periods of the civil war.<sup>6</sup> Farms were also destroyed; livestock was slaughtered; food harvests were burned; and houses were razed. The continuing civil war and rampant lawlessness impeded the ability of relief organizations to distribute food and supplies. In some areas, it became virtually impossible to deliver humanitarian aid because combatants looted supplies for their own use.

### **Civil Administration**

The departure of Siad Barre left Somalia with no government. No dominant party or figure was able to exert authority, even over the capital of Mogadishu. The rehabilitation of government institutions was a daunting task and not one that the international community planned to tackle during UNITAF.

### **Democratization**

Building democracy was also not an important UNITAF objective. An informal preparatory meeting, attended by 14 Somali political

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<sup>5</sup>Andrew S. Natsios, "Humanitarian Relief Intervention in Somalia," in Clarke and Herbst (1997), p. 94.

<sup>6</sup>UN Department of Public Information (1996), p. 287.

movements, was convened in January 1993 to prepare a framework for the formation of a Somali government. But it made little progress. There was no tradition of democracy in Somalia. The lack of an existing political order allowed authority to remain in the hands of warlords, who had gained control through coercion. With the advent of large amounts of humanitarian assistance, warlords were able to increase their power by controlling distribution systems and to increase their wealth by stealing supplies for resale.<sup>7</sup> It was unclear how the general agreement the clan leaders had negotiated would be implemented and how any political authority, much less a democratic one, would be established in Somalia.

### **Reconstruction**

The crisis that commenced in 1991 shattered the existing economy as government services collapsed and businesses closed. Civil war affected every aspect of Somali society. It destroyed at least 60 percent of the country's basic infrastructure. Perhaps 80 percent of Somali households' income came from their animal herds. The civil war led to a sharp decrease in the price of animals, drove up cereal prices, and led to a dramatic increase in food insecurity.

## **THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL ROLES**

The initial U.S. intervention in Somalia through UNITAF was narrowly focused on providing and securing humanitarian assistance. This mandate eventually broadened under UNOSOM II, which took over for UNITAF in May 1993, to include democratization and development even as the number and capacity of U.S. forces dropped precipitously.

### **Military**

UNITAF's mission, as stated in UNSCR 794, was to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia. The UN Secretary General pressed for UNITAF to enforce the negotiated disarmament agreement, but at the U.S. government's insistence,

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<sup>7</sup>Natsios (1997), p. 83.

UNITAF's mandate was limited to securing humanitarian assistance and explicitly did not include instructions to disarm warring factions and other armed groups. Although UNITAF forces conducted some disarmament, this objective was not a priority.<sup>8</sup> UNITAF was authorized under UN Chapter VII to use "all necessary means" to secure humanitarian assistance. However, the United States also emphasized from the outset that UNITAF was a temporary presence that must be succeeded by a UN-led peacekeeping force.

UNSCR 814 (1993) established UNOSOM II, the UN-led force that was to inherit the operation from UNITAF. UNOSOM II lasted from May 1993 until May 1995. It had an authorized strength of 28,000 but never numbered more than 16,000. UNOSOM II was a UN force under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary General, retired U.S. Admiral Jonathan Howe. A Turkish general, Lieutenant General Çevik Bir, commanded the UNOSOM II military contingent. His deputy was an American, Major General Thomas Montgomery, who also commanded a separate U.S. quick reaction force (QRF) that was not under UN command. The United States contributed approximately 3,000 logistics soldiers to UNOSOM II but kept its combat forces distinct. Washington later deployed U.S. Army Ranger and Delta Force units. These did not fall under the local U.S. command but were controlled directly from the United States.

### Civil and Economic

UNITAF did not have a mandate to develop civil institutions or to conduct economic reconstruction in Somalia. Its role was narrowly restricted to providing security for the relief effort. UNOSOM II, however, had a much more expansive mandate:

- While UNITAF focused on the southern parts of Somalia, UNOSOM II covered the entire country.
- While UNITAF strictly limited its activities to securing humanitarian aid, UNOSOM II had the authority to seize heavy weapons of organized factions and small arms of all unauthorized armed elements.

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<sup>8</sup>Bruce R. Pirnie, *Civilians and Soldiers: Achieving Better Coordination*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-1026-SRF, 1998, p. 60.

- While UNITAF did not have any role in nation-building, UNOSOM II was mandated to assist the people of Somalia in rehabilitating their political institutions, rebuilding their economy, and promoting national reconciliation and a political settlement.

## WHAT HAPPENED

U.S. forces participated in both UNITAF and UNOSOM II. UNITAF accomplished its objectives of providing security for relief efforts. Famine was averted through the provision of food and supplies to millions of people. But UNITAF did not focus on reconciliation for the warring factions in Somalia.

In contrast, UNOSOM II had a broader mission but a weaker force. It included only 16,000 troops at its height, not counting the 1,200 troops in the U.S. QRF. UNOSOM II's objectives involved nation-building and included disarming the warring factions; securing ports and airports necessary for the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and building up new political and administrative structures at the local, regional, and national levels.

Neither UNITAF nor UNOSOM II was able to end hostilities between warring parties. Moreover, armed factions in Somalia violently contested the authority of UNOSOM II. This resistance, coupled with an unnecessarily complicated command and control arrangement, led to the armed confrontation in October 1993 that resulted in 18 American deaths. This incident, which has been memorialized in the book and film *Black Hawk Down*,<sup>9</sup> triggered the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia and the ultimate failure of the UNOSOM II mission.

## Security

UNITAF's mission was to provide security for the relief effort. The initial arrival in December 1992 of U.S. troops as part of UNITAF led to a substantial diminution of conflict between warlords and a period of relative quiescence. UNITAF included 28,000 U.S. troops, who were authorized to use decisive force if necessary. It succeeded in

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<sup>9</sup>Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999.

establishing a secure environment for providing humanitarian relief. The presence of U.S. troops in significant strength buttressed the authority of the operation and convinced such warlords as Aideed and Mahdi that challenging the U.S.-led operation would lead to disastrous results for their forces. Consequently, the Mogadishu warlords allowed UNITAF to conduct its operations with relatively little harassment. UNITAF also maintained limited objectives, enforcing what were called the “four no’s”: no banditry, no roadblocks, no visible weapons, and no “technicals” (trucks mounted with heavy weapons).<sup>10</sup>

Coordination between the coalition members and the UNITAF commander was maintained through liaison officers and other means of communication. The U.S. commander retained authority over the entire operation. Somalia was divided into nine sectors, with responsibilities for each given to different partners in the coalition. Significant autonomy was given to each partner within its sector.<sup>11</sup> The command structure remained relatively straightforward, despite the fact that UNITAF incorporated troops from 20 countries. The smooth relations created among coalition partners added to the effectiveness of this segment of the effort.

UNITAF operated for a brief period from December 1992 until May 1993. One of the major innovations of the UNITAF deployment was the establishment of a civil-military operations center (CMOC). The CMOC provided liaison between the military and international and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). This provided a meeting place for civilian agencies and military forces to exchange information and coordinate activities.<sup>12</sup> CMOCs and similar mechanisms would become central to civil-military cooperation in coming post-conflict operations.

The UN began the transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II in March 1993, and authority was formally transferred on May 4. UNOSOM II held a much broader mandate than UNITAF and was authorized to

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<sup>10</sup>Nora Bensahel, “Humanitarian Relief and Nation Building in Somalia,” in Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003, pp. 20–56.

<sup>11</sup>Nora Bensahel, *The Coalition Paradox: The Politics of Military Cooperation*, dissertation, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1999, Ch. 4.

<sup>12</sup>Pirnie (1998), pp. 60–61.

use force against armed combatants beyond cases of self-defense. Despite this expanded mandate, the authorized strength of UNOSOM II was 28,000, significantly smaller than that of UNITAF. At the time of transfer of authority from UNITAF to UNOSOM II, only 12,000 troops were present for the new operation, not including the 1,300-man U.S. QRF. At its height, UNOSOM II and the U.S. QRF totaled 17,500 troops, short of UNOSOM II's authorized strength and even shorter of its effective combat power.<sup>13</sup>

The transfer of responsibility to UNISOM II was psychologically devastating for the remaining forces. The replacement of well-equipped U.S. troops with a smaller number of poorly equipped Pakistanis led to a drastic decrease in patrolling.<sup>14</sup> The reduced troop presence translated into increased risk for the remaining U.S. and UN forces and into decreased effectiveness in disarming the heavily armed Somalis in Mogadishu. The preplanned exit of UNITAF in May 1993 led to a weak start for UNOSOM II, as other countries failed to rally around an operation lacking a strong U.S. core.

The transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II was also accompanied by increasing difficulties resulting from complex command arrangements. The political objectives for the mission came under dispute, with the UN arguing that disarmament must precede the UNOSOM II takeover, and the United States arguing that this was not part of UNITAF's mandate. The command structure for UNOSOM II was also unwieldy and confusing. International troops were led by the Turkish UNOSOM II Commander (Bir), who had an American Deputy Commander (Montgomery). U.S. combat troops reported separately to Montgomery and were not under UN command.<sup>15</sup> The situation became even more muddled when Task Force Ranger later deployed to the country. Task Force Ranger was a special operations force that reported directly to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). Its mission was to capture Aideed because he had attacked Pakistani peacekeepers. Because this force did not report to Montgomery, distinct forces were now operating in Mogadishu with three distinct

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<sup>13</sup>David Bentley and Robert Oakley, "Peace Operations: A Comparison of Somalia and Haiti," National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, *Strategic Forum*, No. 30, May 1995.

<sup>14</sup>Bentley and Oakley (1995).

<sup>15</sup>Bensahel (1999), p. 122.

chains of command. The highly problematic nature of this arrangement became clear shortly.<sup>16</sup>

The security situation grew increasingly unstable as Somali warlords became hostile to the UN troops. On June 5, 1993, Somali fighters, allegedly from Aideed's clan, killed 25 Pakistani peacekeepers. The UN Secretary General was outraged at these killings, which occurred when the soldiers were unloading food at a feeding station. The Security Council reacted by passing UNSCR 837 on June 6, which called for military action against Aideed's clan. UNOSOM II responded by launching a series of attacks, including the seizure of Radio Mogadishu and the destruction of seized militia weapons and equipment.<sup>17</sup>

In support of these UN actions, the United States deployed Task Force Ranger in late August 1993. U.S. forces conducted a series of raids in September but were never able to locate Aideed. On October 3, Task Force Ranger received intelligence about a meeting of senior officials from Aideed's clan. The United States launched an operation to seize these officials and possibly Aideed. During the operation, Somali militia shot down two Black Hawk helicopters, leading U.S. forces to delay their withdrawal as they worked to rescue the downed crew. The complicated U.S. and UN command structure created significant delays in coordinating the rescue effort. As a result, U.S. forces spent the night fighting off Somali militia before being extracted by UN peacekeepers the next morning. Eighteen U.S. soldiers were killed in the firefight, and one was captured alive.<sup>18</sup> This action caused the Clinton administration to set a deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Somalia by March 31, 1994.

Although UNOSOM II continued after the departure of U.S. forces, it downsized both its expectations and its force level. After subsequent unsuccessful attempts to negotiate an accommodation among the warring factions, the UN determined that sustaining an effective humanitarian operation was no longer possible with the resources at hand. In March 1995, the last UNOSOM II forces evacuated Somalia,

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<sup>16</sup>For detailed discussions on mandates and command relationships, see Bensahel (1999), Ch. 4; Bentley and Oakley (1995); and Pirnie (1998), pp. 61–63.

<sup>17</sup>UN Department of Public Information (1996), pp. 299–300.

<sup>18</sup>For a gripping account of this episode, see Bowden (1999).

leaving a situation that soon reverted to the violence and chaos existing prior to U.S. and UN efforts.<sup>19</sup>

### **Humanitarian**

Recommendations from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, a part of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), led to sharply increased amounts of food aid from the United States and NGOs from the summer of 1992 onward. The U.S. Operation Provide Relief from August 1992 to November 1992 provided military assistance and airlift for the emergency humanitarian effort, in conjunction with other aid agencies. The initial delivery of 88,000 metric tons of food by aid agencies was augmented by a new pledge for another 145,000 metric tons. Alongside free distribution of food to the most needy, limited monetization was also attempted through the sale of foods and through distribution in local markets. The monetization program was initiated to infuse money back into the local economy. Funds raised from the sale of food were to be used for mass employment programs, eventually integrating young men into the economy. Unfortunately, the result was continued looting of food supplies for hoarding and resale by warlords through their clan merchants.<sup>20</sup>

UNITAF secured deliveries of food and other humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands of Somalis in rural and urban regions, continuing the cooperation with aid agencies. UNITAF troops built or repaired over 1,200 km of roads; built bridges; dug wells; and established schools, orphanages, and hospitals. UNOSOM II began humanitarian assistance in March 1993 through the Relief and Rehabilitation Programme, which focused on returning refugees and displaced persons, food security, health care, and potable water.

### **Civil Administration**

UNITAF did not include a coordinated effort to help the people of Somalia reestablish national and regional civil institutions throughout the country. In contrast, UNOSOM II's mandate was "nation-

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<sup>19</sup>For a detailed discussion of the UNOSOM II experience, see UN Department of Public Information (1996), pp. 296–318.

<sup>20</sup>Natsios (1997), p. 87.

building”: a determined effort to build new Somali political and administrative structures at the local, regional, and national levels.<sup>21</sup> Unlike later efforts in the Balkans, no substantial international civil structure was created in Somalia during either UNITAF or UNOSOM II to oversee and coordinate U.S. and international efforts to rebuild civil authority.

Before UNITAF, the UN helped broker the January 1993 general agreement on disarmament, but little was done on the civilian side once UNITAF deployed in the country. During UNOSOM II, the Special Representative of the Secretary General periodically attempted to help the Somali factions achieve reconciliation and reestablish a national political authority. Plans for economic reconstruction and development also languished because of the lack of a critical mass of international civilian experts on the ground.<sup>22</sup>

UNOSOM II committed itself to work with all concerned agencies and organizations to strengthen coordination of all aspects of the UN efforts throughout Somalia, including humanitarian, political, and peacekeeping objectives. The Addis Ababa Declaration of December 1, 1993, established the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB).<sup>23</sup> SACB’s aim was to help donors develop a common approach for allocating the resources available for Somalia. The declaration envisaged the broad participation in SACB of donors, UN agencies, NGOs, and multilateral and regional institutions and organizations.<sup>24</sup> Neither SACB nor the UN was effective in this effort, however, because civil conflict continued throughout UNITAF and UNOSOM II. The absence of a functioning police force capable of maintaining security also contributed to a downward spiral into chaos.

One area in which the international community did make a somewhat more sustained effort was law enforcement. To address the lack of law and order in Somalia, the Mogadishu Police Committee was

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<sup>21</sup>See Bentley and Oakley (1995).

<sup>22</sup>UN Department of Public Information (1996), pp. 298–311.

<sup>23</sup>The Addis Ababa Declaration of December 1, 1993, is the final document of the Fourth Coordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia, organized by UNOSOM.

<sup>24</sup>UN General Assembly “Assistance for Humanitarian Relief and the Economic and Social Rehabilitation of Somalia,” 50th Session, item 20(b) of the Provisional Agenda, A/50/447, September 19, 1995.

established to create a capital police force and to help build a judicial system. The reinvigorated police force in Mogadishu, comprising former officers from the Somalia National Police, numbered 3,000 by March 1993.<sup>25</sup> This police force, known as the Auxiliary Security Force, was hampered by low or nonexistent pay and the absence of a judicial system.

UNOSOM II's expanded mandate allowed institution-building and the establishment of police forces and civil authorities.<sup>26</sup> Beginning in 1993, salaries for the 3,000 police in Mogadishu and the additional 2,000 police stationed elsewhere in Somalia were allotted from UNOSOM II funds. UNOSOM II developed an ambitious plan to create a 10,000-member Somalia National Police Force, as well as necessary courts, prisons, and a Ministry of Justice.<sup>27</sup> Because of a lack of funding, these efforts were never implemented. By March 1995, the Somalia National Police consisted of 8,000 officers. When UNOSOM II withdrew in May 1995, efforts to create a national or Mogadishu police force or judicial system ended, and further initiatives were terminated because of the absence of financial and institutional support.

### Democratization

Efforts toward political settlement of the situation in Somalia received sporadic attention during the UNITAF and UNOSOM II periods. Although no mechanism was established for implementation of the January 1993 general agreement on disarmament, the Conference on National Reconciliation in Somalia met on March 15, 1993, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At the end of the conference, the leaders of all 15 Somali political movements reached an agreement that had four parts: security and disarmament, reconstruction and rehabilitation, restoration of property and settlement of disputes, and transitional mechanisms.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, building democracy

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<sup>25</sup>Martin R. Ganzglass, "The Restoration of the Somali Justice System," in Clarke and Herbst (1997), p. 24.

<sup>26</sup>Ganzglass (1997), p. 29.

<sup>27</sup>Robert M. Perito, *The American Experience with Police in Peace Operations*, Clementsport, Nova Scotia: The Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 2002a, p. 33.

<sup>28</sup>UN Department of Public Information (1996), p. 299.

was a stated objective for UNOSOM II, especially for the United States. This was reflected in UNSCR 814, which noted that it was important to set up “transitional government institutions and consensus on basic principles and steps leading to the establishment of representative democratic institutions.”<sup>29</sup>

These efforts lapsed in implementation, in part because UNOSOM II devoted little time or effort to achieving societal change or a political settlement between fighting factions. As a result, preconditions for effective postconflict reconstruction were never met. The conflict endured throughout both UNITAF and UNOSOM II. UNITAF made some progress in tempering the chaotic situation to allow delivery of relief supplies. Indeed, its ability to decrease general crime, looting, and lawlessness was critical to build the semblance of a functioning society in Somalia.

In the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the warlords were generally the political arbiters for the population. When aid agencies dealt directly with such warlords as General Mohamed Aideed, clan loyalists and armed supporters were first in line for aid, leaving little for the remaining population. Thus, depending on the warlords to distribute humanitarian relief merely concentrated political and economic power in the hands of unscrupulous armed individuals. The warlords used the resulting economic leverage to expand their power base, recruit followers, and buy weaponry. In addition, sharp increases in the price of food resulting from the drought and the interruption of agriculture created incentives for the theft of food. Warring clans would steal food from aid stocks and, in conjunction with clan merchants, sell the supplies at inflated prices.<sup>30</sup>

In dealing with the warlords, the United States and the international community shifted their approach from co-option to confrontation over time. During UNOSOM I, they worked through the warlords and attempted to persuade them to ensure the safety and equitable distribution of food aid. This worked initially but became more problematic when tensions increased with Aideed’s clan. By the time of UNOSOM II, the United States and the international community

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<sup>29</sup>UNSCR 814 (1993).

<sup>30</sup>Natsios (1997), pp. 83–85.

were moving toward a more-confrontational approach, even as the number and capacity of U.S. forces were diminishing.

The political situation in Somalia did not improve over time. The March 1993 Addis Abba agreement was never implemented because of the increasing hostility and violence of General Aideed's clan toward the international presence. Moreover, the international community did not address the regional dimensions of the internal Somali struggle. A number of neighboring states maintained relationships with, and financially supported, various warlords. The United States and the other intervening powers did not invest the time and effort to understand these external connections and to exploit them to put pressure on the warlords to reach a settlement.

### **Reconstruction**

Little progress was made on reconstruction during the three-year intervention in Somalia. Some international organizations and NGOs attempted small-scale reconstruction projects in targeted localities, but the immediate priority of the UN mission in Somalia was to provide security for humanitarian activities. In the absence of a central governing authority, the international community focused mainly on the implementation of community-based interventions aimed at rebuilding local infrastructures and increasing the self-reliance of the local population. For example, the UN Development Programme-funded Somalia Rural Rehabilitation Program established offices in numerous cities and had a positive impact on the daily lives of people through the rehabilitation of public buildings, schools, water supplies, and health centers.<sup>31</sup> The reconstruction effort ended, however, when the UN withdrew from Somalia in March 1995.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

U.S. and UN nation-building efforts in Somalia were not successful. There was no sustained effort to help Somalia reestablish national and regional institutions or civil administration, though the United States, UN, and other aid agencies did provide humanitarian assis-

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<sup>31</sup>UN General Assembly (1995).

tance in such areas as Mogadishu. The lessons learned were predominantly negative:

- Nation-building objectives should be scaled to available forces, resources, and staying power.
- Military forces need to be complemented by civil capabilities for law enforcement, economic reconstruction, and political development.
- Unity of command can be as important in peace operations as in war.
- There can be no economic or political development without security.

Somalia was the first post–Cold War attempt by the United States to lead a multinational effort in nation-building. Military power alone proved insufficient; it needed to be complemented by adequate civil reconstruction efforts. U.S. forces were initially introduced with a purely humanitarian mission. That mission dramatically expanded following the introduction of UNOSOM II, just as the bulk of U.S. troops withdrew. U.S.-led forces were initially able to control feuding warlords and impose a modicum of security. However, there was no attempt during this period to build civil or political institutions.

No international police, judges, penal authorities, administrators, or technical experts were deployed to fill the governance gap or begin reconstruction. Unlike in Bosnia and Kosovo, no international structure was established during UNOSOM I, UNITAF, or UNOSOM II to oversee nation-building in Somalia. By the time even a few civil institutions were created, such as SACB, international military forces had been drastically reduced, the U.S. role had diminished, and the warring factions were no longer intimidated. Nation-building goals needed to be matched with adequate forces, funding, and time.

At both the political and military levels, the Somali operation represented, above all, an egregious failure in command. At the political level, U.S. policymakers believed the UN was in effective charge, while the UN looked to Washington for leadership. Neither U.S. nor UN officials had experience running an operation of this dimension. U.S. officials were in the midst of a presidential transition. U.S. forces conducting the hunt for Aideed were not under the control of the

local American commander, and U.S. combat troops in Somalia were not under the control of the UN commander. Three separate international forces—two of them American—were operating from the same facilities on the same terrain in Mogadishu. Neither the UN nor the United States made arrangements to back up or rescue the operation on October 3, 1993. A relatively small military action and a limited operational setback became a strategic defeat for the Clinton administration. The result was a precipitous U.S. withdrawal, the eventual demise of the entire international effort, and greatly increased skepticism in the U.S. Congress and among the public about the engagement of U.S. military forces in nation-building activities.

Security also proved to be a basic prerequisite for economic growth. Development assistance is futile if businesses and households are constantly at the risk of seeing their goods appropriated by armed groups. In a lawless environment, neither production nor trade can proceed.